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*JOINT FORCES STAFF COLLEGE*  
JOINT ADVANCED WARFIGHTING SCHOOL



**NARCO-PIPELINE TO WEST AFRICA:**

by

Jordan Willoughby

Customs Border Protection

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School in partial satisfaction of the requirements of a Master of Science Degree in Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Joint Forces Staff College or the Department of Defense.

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April 2009

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**Abstract**

The value of counter narcotics programs between the United States and Colombia is very evident and provides for national security to both countries. The bilateral engagement between the governments of Colombia and the United States provides the foundation for multilateral nation development that fuels regional security and stability. This paper addresses the cartel violence, environmental cost of narcoterrorism and the pipeline that is transporting these effects and narcotics to West Africa.

This examination includes an analysis of cultural differences between South America and West Africa and the organizations engaged in combating or facilitating the pipeline. The strategic assessment of past and current counter narcotics plans of U.S. organizations involved in curtailing narcotic trafficking is scrutinized.

Examining the components and functions of Plan Colombia and its subsequent plan, Strategy for Strengthening Democracy and Promoting Social Development, provides an avenue of analysis on how these elements and lessons learned can be exported to West Africa.

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## **I. Introduction**

Illicit narcotic trafficking is a leading contributor to destabilizing nations, but especially to the developing West African and South American countries. Inherent to the nature of illegal narcotics trafficking is the enormous profit realized by the criminal organizations conducting this malaise upon society. Illegal narcotics are the outbound flow and the resultant inbound flow, which consists of cash and complex financial operations involving money laundering, in which underground economy transactions destabilize a country's legitimate economy. "The value of the global illicit drug market for the year 2003 was estimated at US\$13 billion at the production level, at \$94 billion at the wholesale level (taking seizures into account), and at US\$322 billion based on retail prices and taking seizures and other losses into account."<sup>1</sup> The figures in billions of dollars can be reduced to the basic product of 1 kilogram. Using cocaine pricing information from the Joint Interagency Task Force a single kilogram in Columbia currently retails for approximately \$1,500.00, in Miami 22,000.00, England 50,000.00 and Saudi Arabia 120,000.00. The sum is staggering and the monetary resources are utilized to destabilize governments and law enforcement agencies through corruption, coercion, and assassination. The large resources include the procurement of advanced technology to combat effective law enforcement. Illicit narcotics trafficking and especially the profits of this nefarious criminal enterprise is a dominating de-stabilizing factor to all involved nations and an incredible cost in resources in a country's treasure and lives.

\$207M in Currency Seized from Zhenli Ye Gon's Mexico City Residence, March 2007<sup>2</sup>



The illustration above presents a different viewpoint to the quote- “So you think that money is the root of all evil? Have you ever asked what is the root of all money?”<sup>3</sup>. The

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2005 *World Drug Report*, Vol. 1 Chapter 2, pg.127. [http://www.unodc.org/pdf/WDR\\_2005/volume\\_1\\_web.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/WDR_2005/volume_1_web.pdf), (accessed 10 Aug 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Office of National Drug Control, 2008 *National Drug Control Strategy* p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> “Ayn Rand Quotes” American Novelist [http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/a/ayn\\_rand.html](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/a/ayn_rand.html), (accessed 10-27-08)

picture indicates illicit narcotics that is posing a serious threat to United States national security and a leading contributor to destabilizing other nations.

The illustration above presents a vivid picture of the enormous profits that drain health care systems, fund cartel violence, cause environmental damage and of paramount importance to any country, the loss of thousands of lives. It is vital to understand the costs to society in any discussion of proposed solutions and engagements in order to appreciate the enormity of the challenge. The United States should apply lessons learned from strategic engagement with Colombia and provide that narco-trafficking expertise to the African Command (AFRICOM) for strategic engagement with West Africa nations to preserve U.S. interests.

### **Examination of Cartel Violence**

There are many locations and organizations that could be examined and the selection of Mexico and the Mexican Gulf Cartel (Cartel del Golfo) Los Zetas will be due to the shared border between Mexico and the United States. In addition many experts recognize that the Mexican cartels are dominating the illegal drug market in the United States and certainly a leader among the cartels is the Gulf Cartel lead by Guillen Cardenas. The Gulf Cartel employs a group of former elite military soldiers known as "Los Zetas." The Zetas are unique among drug enforcer gangs in that they operate as "a private army under the orders of Cardenas' Gulf Cartel, the first time a drug lord has had his own paramilitary." The National Drug Intelligence Center reports, Mexican cartels are "the predominant smugglers, transporters, and wholesale distributors of cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamine, and Mexico-produced heroin in the United States" and are expanding their control over the distribution of these drugs in areas controlled by

Colombian and Dominican criminal groups, and now believed to include all of the U.S.A.”<sup>4</sup> The most common method of expanding their control is typically brutal violence targeting rival cartels and law enforcement. Here is a chilling example of a citizen fighting the cartels and the unfortunate results.

Drug-related violence in the border town of Nuevo Laredo, the major portal for U.S.-Mexican commerce, left the city of 350,000 without a police chief until printing-shop owner Alejandro Domínguez Coello valiantly accepted the post on the morning of June 8, 2005. “I’m not beholden to anyone. My commitment is to the citizenry,” stated the 56-year-old father of three. Within six hours, he lay in a thickening pool of blood after hit men believed to belong to *Los Zetas* paramilitary force fired more than 30 bullets into his body. Their message was clear: narco-traffickers control the streets of Nuevo Laredo. “They are openly defying the Mexican state,” said Mexico City political scientist Jorge Chabat. “They are showing that they can kill anybody at any time. It’s chilling.”<sup>5</sup>

This is one story of thousands depicting the repressive violence that threatens our and neighbouring countries’ national security. The Los Zetas’ Special Forces training in aerial assaults, rapid deployment, ambushes, marksmanship, prisoner rescues, intelligence collection, counter-surveillance techniques, sophisticated communications, and the art of intimidation, as their chief asset. This is particularly disturbing to law enforcement.

### **Cost to Health Care**

The United States, the world leader in gross national product in 2002, was just over US\$10 trillion. Compare that to the estimated cost of drug abuse in 2002 of US\$180billion and we realize that the cost to the world leader in gross national product (GNP) is more than most countries GNP. The economic cost of drug abuse in 2002 was estimated at \$180.9 billion. This value represents both the use of resources to address

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<sup>4</sup> National Drug Intelligence Center, National Drug Threat Assessment 2006 January <http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic/pubs11/18862/strateg.htm> accessed 09/03/08.



health and crime consequences as well as the loss of potential productivity from disability, death and withdrawal from the legitimate workforce.<sup>6</sup>

Illustrating this cost in terms that are very important to U.S. taxpayers, every “American family pays \$1500 in taxes each year to cover drug-related costs to society”<sup>7</sup> An examination of the costs shows two categories direct and indirect. “Direct costs include those for drug treatment, health care, costs of goods and services lost to crime, law enforcement, incarceration, and the judicial system fees. “Indirect costs are those due to the loss of productivity from death, human suffering, drug abuse-related illnesses, victims of crime and crime.”<sup>8</sup> The cost in monetary treasure is disheartening but the loss of human treasure, lives lost to this malaise, is even more staggering.

“Over 26,000 individuals died from drug-induced causes in the United States in 2002, seven times more than those killed in all of the September 11 attacks.”<sup>9</sup> Incorporated into that figure is 670,307 drug abuse-related emergency room visits in the United States-and health insurance certainly did not cover all the costs. The most important resource to any country is the next generation. In 2002, 2.3 million of our next generation, young people ages 12 to 17 needed treatment for an illicit drug problem. The

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<sup>5</sup> Grayson George W “Los Zetas: the Ruthless Army Spawned by a Mexican Drug Cartel” Foreign Policy Research Institute <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/200805.grayson.loszetas.html> accessed 9-01-08.

<sup>6</sup> Office of National Drug Control Policy (2004). *The Economic Costs of Drug Abuse in the United States, 1992-2002*. Washington, DC: Executive Office of the President (Publication No. 207303).

<sup>7</sup> Drug Enforcement Administration <http://www.justthinktwice.com/costs/YourTaxDollarsatWork.cfm> , accessed 8-30-08.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

cost of detoxification treatment is about \$475 a day. The next step is rehabilitation treatment, which costs about \$375 a day. A quick analysis using data from the American Community Survey Demographic and Housing Estimates U. S. Census Bureau reveals that a breakdown of that 2.3 million translates to about two percent of our future generation. The positive note is that the National Drug Control Strategy reports a 24 percent decline in youth drug use since 2001. An additional cost to the taxpayer is the environmental cost both in dollars and ecological mayhem.

### **Environmental Cost**

How extensive is the damage to the world's environment by coca, opium and marijuana planting, including the manufacture of methamphetamine and cocaine, and the devastation to inner cities? Coca and opium require the clear-cutting of rain forests in Central and South America. The value of the rain forests is undisputed but how much the world has lost is relatively unknown. "One quarter (25 percent) of all of the deforestation that has taken place in Peru in modern times is associated with clear cutting and burning to prepare land for the planting of coca bushes. Over the past twenty years, 2.4 million hectares of rain forest (1 hectare equals 10,000 square meters or 2.47 acres)— an area roughly the size of El Salvador- has been lost to drug production fields in the Andean region of Peru, Bolivia and Colombia. One hectare of coca field requires four hectares of forest to be cleared."<sup>10</sup> Once the coca is harvested the production cycle is initiated with hazardous chemicals. This harmful phase of production is dangerous to both the environment and the workers involved in it. This loss of rain forest is not limited to

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Central and South America. It strikes close to home with the destruction of national forests in the United States for the growing of marijuana.

Rarely published in the media is the chemical cocktail that is required to produce cocaine. Traces of chemicals such as ethyl ether, acetone, ammonia sulphuric acid and hydrochloric acid are found in each line of coke that users ingest, an often-overlooked fact of dependency.

“Chemicals like ethyl ether, acetone, ammonia, sulphuric acid and hydrochloric acid are used in jungle laboratories to turn coca leaves into coca paste and finally, cocaine. 14,800 tons of these chemicals are discharged into the Amazon River Basin each year in the production of cocaine. The chemicals discharged from jungle drug laboratories, combined with the agricultural imbalance of coca growing fields, endanger 210 mammal species, 600 bird species, 170 reptile species, 100 amphibian species and 600 fish species in the Amazon and Orinoco River systems alone.”<sup>11</sup>

The damage from hazardous chemicals is also experienced in the United States due largely to methamphetamine production labs. “For every pound of methamphetamine produced, between five and six pounds of highly toxic waste is generated. Remote areas offer easy disposal of toxic by-products of the manufacturing process. It can take up to three or more days and more than \$100,000 to clean up contaminated soil, destroy buildings, and remove toxic chemicals from drug sites.”<sup>12</sup> Not only are the environmental costs a monstrosity, but the lingering effects on the environment are equally devastating.

This introduction has produced numerous reasons and examples of the importance of why it is vital to all nations to produce solutions to stop narco-trafficking. Slavery and

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

piracy are internationally recognized, as crimes that are universally condemned and prosecuted. It is only a matter of time until narco-trafficking joins that list. The United States should apply lessons learned from strategic engagement with Colombia and provide that narco-trafficking expertise to AFRICOM for strategic engagement with West African nations to preserve U.S. interests.

## **II. Background**

### **Narcoterrorism**

It is important to define terrorism and narco-terrorism in order to understand the legal and political implications and how globalization has affected these crimes. The 22<sup>nd</sup> United States Code (U.S.C.) § 2656f(d)(2)), defines terrorism as “the premeditated, politically motivated violence against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents”. International terrorism involves citizens, or territory, of more than one country. A terrorist group is any group practicing, or that has significant sub-groups that practice, international terrorism. It is interesting to note here that Narco-terrorism is not defined in the 22<sup>nd</sup> U.S.C. and that the importance of establishing whether a political construct is being used or a strict legal definition to establish criminalistic intent is related to capacity and resources. The term Narco-terrorism is used in the language of the Dawson Family Community Protection Act in order to increase funding and provide an additional 7 million to High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA’s) to target the safety of communities and protection of neighborhoods.

“Pub. L. 109–469, title III, § 302(b), Dec. 29, 2006, 120 Stat. 3524, provided that: “Congress finds the following:

“(1) In the early morning hours of October 16, 2002, the home of Carnell and Angela Dawson was firebombed in apparent retaliation for Mrs. Dawson’s notification to police about persistent drug distribution activity in their East Baltimore City neighborhood.

“(2) The arson claimed the lives of Mr. and Mrs. Dawson and their 5 young children, aged 9 to 14.

“(3) The horrific murder of the Dawson family is a stark example of domestic narco-terrorism.”<sup>13</sup>

The example above illustrates the complexity in just defining the term and the value in ensuring it is used in the proper construct as is evidenced by the horrific tragedy of the Dawson’s. When was the term first coined? The term “Narcoterrorism” is credited to Peruvian President Belaunde Terry to describe terrorist-like attacks against his country’s drug enforcement police in 1983. “In the late 1980’s, American government agencies started using the concept of “narcoterrorism”, in order to describe inter alia the involvement of the Soviet Union in the drug trade.”<sup>14</sup> The term has raised controversy but is generally recognized “to mean the attempts of narcotics traffickers to influence the policies of a government or a society through violence and intimidation, and to hinder the enforcement of the law and the administration of justice by the systematic threat or use of such violence.”<sup>15</sup> The concept of narcoterrorism is causing terror and obstructing justice and the reality is the loss of innocents exemplified by the Dawson family provides a working definition and the background on the term narcoterrorism.

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<sup>13</sup> Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act, *Public Law 109-469-Dec 29,2006*.

<sup>14</sup> Bruce M. Bagley ed, *Drug Trafficking Research in the Americas: An Annotated Bibliography*. (Miami, FL: North-South Center, 1997).

### III. Culture

#### Discussion/Analysis Differences Between Latin America And West Africa

The value of counter narcotics programs between the United States and Colombia is very evident and provides for national security to both countries. In developing a plan to engage West Africa, the cultural, religious, demographic, economic and governmental differences between Colombia and West Africa must be studied. The key differences between Colombia (Latin America) and West Africa that must be examined are: language, colonization, religion, health, literacy, and economic indicators.

#### Language & Colonization

Language, the foundation of communication is certainly a leading factor when comparing the regions. The predominant language in Colombia and the majority of Latin America is Spanish, with the exception of Brazil, where Portuguese is spoken. There are several tribal dialects spoken throughout Latin America, but these have little impact on the governance of the region or the ability to conduct business. Two European languages dominate verbal communication in Latin American, while numerous tribal dialects dominate in West Africa. A major difference between Latin America and West America is the lack of a common language. The absence of a common language in the region is a challenge in conducting business. An understanding of the specific area's tribal dialect will be a valuable tool in forming partnerships.

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<sup>15</sup> Ehrenfeld Rachel, Confronting Terrorism 2002, "Funding Terrorism Sources and Methods," *Workshop held at Los Alamos National Laboratory March 25-29, 2002*, [http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/lanl/funding\\_terror.pdf](http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/lanl/funding_terror.pdf), (accessed November 12, 2008).

West Africa's colonization and influence from the European countries of English, French and Portuguese are the reasons for the official spoken languages. The European background in West Africa has influenced governance and culture well into the twentieth century. Many West Africa nations began their independence only fifty to seventy-five years ago. By contrast, many countries in Latin America have been independent for over two centuries. Due to this maturity, governance is stronger and democracies are more stable in Latin America. The African Command will need to develop and leverage the significant influence Britain, France and Portugal still have in West Africa when addressing the counter narcotics strategy in this region.

## **Religion**

Catholicism is the predominant religion in Latin America and can be a unifying influence; it has political influence and is viewed positively by almost 70% of the population. When compared to Latin America, West African populations exhibit greater diversity with larger percentages of Muslim, Christian, and tribal religions. The tribal religious beliefs are common throughout the region, but have little impact on the geopolitical situation. "There are several predominantly Muslim countries where Shari'a law has a significant influence and has also been the cause of religious tensions and conflict in the region."<sup>16</sup> The conflicts in Latin America are based on economic, class or political disparities not on religious differences.

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<sup>16</sup> *Europa Regional Surveys of the World*, 35<sup>th</sup> Edition (2006), "AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA 2006", p. 882.

## Health Literacy & Economic Indicators

In South America nearly 90 per cent of all adults can read and write. Examining the latest estimations by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics, the region's overall illiteracy rate is 11 per cent. Compared with other indicators, including economic and health, South American countries also rank higher than West Africa. For illustration purposes only three South American Countries (Colombia, Venezuela, and Brazil) have been compared to three West Africa countries (Senegal, Nigeria, and Guinea Bissau). Using the United States as baseline for illustration, the first area of comparison is literacy and health and is shown on the table below.<sup>17</sup>

**TABLES**

	U.S	COL	VEN	BRA	SEN	NIG	GUI BA
Literacy %	99.0	92.8	93.3	88.6	39.3	68.0	42.4
Infant mortalit/1000 births	6.3	21.7	22.	23.3	60.2	95.7	101.6
Life expectancy	78.1	71.4	73.4	71.4	57	46.5	47.5
Percent HIV rate	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.8	5.4	10.0

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<sup>17</sup> U.S. Central Intelligence Agency World Fact Book, Edition (2008), Washington D.C.: CIA, available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/co.html>, (accessed 27 December 2008).



TABLE 1 COMPARISON OF LITERACY &amp; HEALTH INDICATORS.

	U.S	(COL, VEN, BRA) AVERAGE	(SEN, NIG, GUI BA) AVERAGE
Literacy %	99.0	91.5	49.9 42% lower than South America
Infant mortalit/1000 births	6.3	22.3	85.8 64% higher than South America
Life expectancy	78.1	72	50.3 30% lower than South America
Percent HIV rate	0.6	0.6	5.4 980% higher than South America

Table 1.1 AVERAGE COMPARISONS OF LITERACY &amp; HEALTH INDICATORS

Compared to South America's literacy rate, West Africa struggles not to have the world's worst. The West Africa literacy rate is 42% lower than in South America. Health factors are equally bleak. The infant mortality rate in West Africa is three times greater than in South America. The difference in life expectancy is startling with West Africa at 50 years, compared to 72 years in South America. The rate of HIV infection is equally sobering, being 10 times higher in West Africa than South America. An interesting fact is that as cocaine use has increased so has Brazil's HIV infection rate. Brazil, the region's most populous country, accounts for around 43% of people who are HIV positive in Latin America.<sup>18</sup> In some Brazilian cities, more than 60% of drug users are HIV positive. These figures are grossly disproportional and point to educational and medical barriers that must be addressed and included in planning and for engagements in West Africa. As shown in Table 2, the economic indicators are equally unbalanced.

	U.S	COL	VEN	BRA	SEN	NIG	GUI BA
Per Capita Purchasing Power Parity	\$45,800	\$7,400	\$12,800	\$9,500	\$1,700	\$2,100	\$600
% Population below poverty line	12	49	38	31	54	70	N/A

Table 2. COMPARISON OF ECONOMIC INDICATORS<sup>19</sup>

The average Latin American can buy 4.5 times the goods and services that the average individual in West Africa can purchase. The poverty rate is 32% higher in West Africa than in South America.

	U.S	(COL, VEN, BRA) AVERAGE	(SEN, NIG, GUI BA) AVERAGE
Per Capita Purchasing Power Parity	\$45,800	\$9,900	\$1,900  81% lower than South America
% Population below poverty line	12	39	62 32% higher than South America

Table 2.1 AVERAGE COMPARISONS OF ECONOMIC INDICATORS

A concept was developed to provide a metric for indicators, which is called the Human Development Index (HDI). “The HDI – human development index – is a summary composite index that measures a country's average achievements in three basic aspects of human development: health, knowledge, and a decent standard of living.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Avert, “Latin American Statistics Summary”, <http://www.avert.org/southamerica.htm>, (accessed 5 Jan 2009).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

The first Human Development Report (1990) introduced a new way of measuring development by combining indicators of life expectancy, educational attainment and income into a composite human development index, the HDI.<sup>21</sup> The breakthrough for the HDI was the creation of a single statistic, which was to serve as a frame of reference for both social and economic development. “In West Africa, the average Human Development Index (HDI) ranking is 2.3 times poorer than South America.”<sup>22</sup>

The analysis of the Human Development Index applied in a comparison for the two regions will provide an indicator that West Africa is more likely susceptible to corruption. West Africa nations, facing far greater sustenance and health challenges, will tend to be more vulnerable and at greater risk to engage in illegal activities. The U.S. and Colombian governments continue to face obstacles of corruption and the rule of law in regard to Counternarcotics Operations, which can be expected to multiply exponentially in West Africa.

	U.S	COL	VEN	BRA	SEN	NIG	GUI BA
Human development index ranking	8	70	72	69	156	159	173

Table 3. Human development index ranking (HDI).

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<sup>20</sup> United Nations Development Programme, “Human Development Index”, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/indices/hdi/question,68,en.html>, (accessed January 5, 2009).

<sup>21</sup> United Nations Development Programme, “Human Development Index”, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/indices/hdi/>, (accessed January 5, 2009).

<sup>22</sup> Country Watch, "Human Development Index", <http://www.countrywatch.com/>, (accessed 9 Nov 2008).

	U.S	(COL, VEN, BRA) AVERAGE	(SEN, NIG, GUI BA) AVERAGE
Human development index ranking	8	70.3	162.7 <b>131% higher than Latin America</b>

Table 3.1. AVERAGE COMPARISON OF HDI

Rule of Law and Control of Corruption are two of the six dimensions which can be utilized in the development of metrics to quantify the exercise of authority and governance in a country. This includes (1) the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced, (2) the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies, and (3) the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them.<sup>23</sup> The World Bank expresses Rule of Law as “the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, in particular the quality of contract enforcement, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence.”<sup>24</sup> Control of corruption is “the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as “capture” of the state by elites and private interests.”<sup>25</sup>

Rule of law as measured by the World Bank is measured on a scale of -2.50 to +2.50, with higher scores indicating improved governance in regard to the application of the rule of law in countries observed.

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<sup>23</sup>World Bank Group. “Governance Matters 2008 Worldwide Governance Indicators, 1996-2007 <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.asp>, (accessed 5 Jan 2009).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

Corruption and Rule of Law are ranked considerably less in West Africa than in South America; Corruption by 47% and Rule of Law by 43%. Control of Corruption and Rule of Law are depicted in Table 4. The data indicates that increased levels of corruption and inadequate governance should be expected when comparing West Africa to South America.

	U.S	COL	VEN	BRA	SEN	NIG	GUI BA
Control of corruption	+1.83	-0.16	-0.94	-0.15	-0.20	-1.44	-0.71
Rule of Law	+1.58	-0.70	-1.10	-0.21	-0.20	-1.44	-1.26

Table 4. Control of Corruption & Rule of Law indexes.<sup>26</sup>

	U.S	(COL, VEN, BRA) AVERAGE	(SEN, NIG, GUI BA) AVERAGE
Control of corruption	+1.83	-0.53	-0.78 47% higher than Latin America
Rule of Law	+1.58	-0.67	-0.96 43% higher than Latin America

Table 4.1 Average Comparison of Corruption & Rule of Law Indexes.

The dilemma of corruption has dire global consequences and can be a leading contributor to economic and political turmoil. The following information from the Office of National Drug Policy captures the essence of corruption through the drug enforcement lens:

Corruption slows and impedes the consolidation of democratic institutions and weakens the rule of law. Around the world corruption diverts resources from productive use, distorts economies, reduces growth, and causes enormous social tension. High levels of corruption make it more difficult for countries to grow and develop. It is all too often linked with trans-border criminal activity,

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<sup>26</sup> Country Watch, "Control of Corruption", <http://www.countrywatch.com/cw/>, (accessed 6 Jan 2009).

including drug trafficking, organized crime, and money laundering. Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) and other criminal syndicates with enormous resources to draw upon have a nearly open-ended capacity to corrupt. International criminals spare no expense to corrupt government and law enforcement officials in countries that serve as their base of operations or as critical avenues for transshipment of drugs, arms, precursor chemicals, or bulk cash.<sup>27</sup>

The two following examples of corruption illustrate that this evil can be found at all levels of government or organizational hierarchy. Corruption reaches the highest levels of governance in West Africa, as evidenced by Prime Minister Gomes of Guinea-Bissau, when forced to resign after being implicated in a drug trafficking scandal in March of 2007.<sup>28</sup> In the neighbouring country of the Republic of Benin another example is presented: "In Benin the Interior Minister arrested the Controller General of the police and the General Director of the Anti-Narcotics Squad, when two cartons of cocaine were missing following a drug seizure."<sup>29</sup> The Country of Senegal in West Africa is certainly a leader for change and is making progress in improving its ranking in both Rule of Law and Control of Corruption. Senegal is an indicator that forward steps are being made in the region. Senegal is rated at -0.20 respectively for both Control of Corruption and Rule of Law, which is well below the South America average. Furthermore, "Senegal is known and respected for its able diplomats and has often supported the U.S. in the United

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<sup>27</sup> U.S. President, International Office of National Drug Control Policy, "Reducing Corruption, ONDCP Fact Sheet" The White House, September 20, 2007  
[http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/publications/international/factsht/reduc\\_corrupt.html](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/publications/international/factsht/reduc_corrupt.html), (accessed 17 Oct 2008).

<sup>28</sup> Bencze, R.W., JIATF SOUTH International Liaison Officer, JIATF SOUTH International Cocaine Weekly Round-up, 17-24 August 2007.

<sup>29</sup> Bencze, R.W., JIATF SOUTH International Liaison Officer, JIATF SOUTH International Cocaine Weekly Round-up and 31 August-07 September 2007.

Nations, including with troop contributions for peacekeeping activities.”<sup>30</sup> The evidence points to Senegal’s commitment to democracy and human rights remain steady. Is the evidence sufficient enough to indicate that Senegal should be the focal point of a Plan Colombia engagement for the West Africa region?

Senegal has entered its fifth decade of independence and its political stability far exceeds its neighbors. Senegal because of its political stature, has attempted to mediate a number of conflicts, while simultaneously encouraging peace and democracy. The metrics also indicate that Senegal could be the lead for the region as the first country in West Africa to implement the Colombian Counter narcotics engagement. The questions to address are:

- Is the model of Plan Colombia and its subsequent plan “The "Strategy for Strengthening Democracy and Promoting Social Development” exportable?
- Can this model for Counternarcotics partnership be modified with the aim of conducting successful Counternarcotics operations in any number of countries in West Africa?

#### **IV. Analysis**

##### **Plan Columbia**

The development of “Plan Colombia” in 2001 by the Government of Colombia is an integrated strategy including synchronization of U.S. interagency assistance to meet the most pressing challenges confronting Colombia – “promoting the peace process, combating the narcotics industry, reviving the Colombian economy, and strengthening

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<sup>30</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Bureau for International African Affairs*, “Background Note: Senegal”, September 2007, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2862.htm>, (accessed 19 Oct 2008).

the democratic pillars of Colombian society. Plan Colombia is a \$7.5 billion program. President Pastrana has pledged \$4 billion of Colombian resources and has called on the international community to provide the remaining \$3.5 billion to assist this effort.”<sup>31</sup>

The commitment from the United States and in consultation with the Colombian Government is providing a \$1.3 billion total U.S. interagency assistance package to Colombia. The total U.S. interagency assistance package will help Colombia address the broad range of complex and inter-related challenges it faces – an its efforts to fight the illicit drug trade, to increase the rule of law, to protect human rights, to expand economic development, to institute judicial reform, and to foster peace.<sup>32</sup> The five components of the assistance package are: Support for Human Rights and Judicial Reform, Expansion of Counter-Narcotics Operations into Southern Colombia, Alternative Economic Development, Increased Interdiction and Assistance for the Colombian National Police. Did the elements of this assistance package provide the value needed for the Colombian Government to produce its desired end state? A brief analysis of these components and a discussion on whether Plan Colombia was a success will provide additional insight in the formation of this thesis.

### **Components of Plan Colombia**

In reviewing the aid package-targeting support for human rights and judicial reform \$122 million is provided for a broad range of human rights, judicial reform, and other programs designed to support the peace process and to strengthen democracy and

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<sup>31</sup> U.S. Department of State. Fact Sheet. “Plan Colombia”: <http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rls/fs/2001/1042.htm> ,(accessed 24 November 2008).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.



the rule of law in Colombia. The earmark of \$122 million is the third largest of the five components in terms of monetary resources. “Specific initiatives include protecting nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) concerned with human rights (\$4 million); strengthening human rights institutions (\$7 million); establishing human rights units within the Colombian National Police (CNP) and the Colombian attorney general's office (\$25 million); training judges and prosecutors (\$7.5 million); and providing funding to train and support Colombian law enforcement personnel in anti-corruption, anti-money laundering, and anti-kidnapping measures.”<sup>33</sup>

A supply reduction strategy in the amount of \$390.5 million will expand Counter-Narcotics Operations into Southern Colombia.

“These funds will support certain aspects of training and equipping the second and third counter narcotics battalions in the Colombian army. It will fund procurement and support of 14 UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters (\$208 million); procurement, refurbishment, and support of 30 UH-1H Huey II helicopters (\$60 million); and support for 15 UH-1N helicopters (\$60 million) for use by the Colombian army.”<sup>34</sup>

A quick analysis of the aviation capabilities produced by these assets will not only be capable of Counter-Narcotics operations but also provide the capacity for a quick reaction force to combat the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia–Ejército del Pueblo (FARC).

An additional supply reduction strategy of this aid package is \$81 million to support alternative and economic development programs in Colombia. The funds are to

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

assist small farmers who now grow coca and opium poppies make the transition to legal economic activity as interdiction and eradication make narcotics farming less profitable.

“Included within this package are \$27.5 million to assist internally displaced persons, more than \$30 million for voluntary eradication programs, \$12 million in assistance to local governments, and \$2.5 million for environmental programs to protect fragile lands and watersheds.”<sup>35</sup>

The aid package recognizes that narcotic cultivation is a regional challenge and provides funds for Bolivia (\$85 million) and Ecuador (\$8 million).

The fourth component is increased interdiction in the amount of \$129.4 million to increase U.S. and Colombian narcotics interdiction efforts. “The majority of these funds (\$68 million) are dedicated to upgrading the radar systems in four U.S. Customs Service P-3 airborne early warning interdiction aircraft used to detect and monitor suspect targets destined for the United States from cocaine source zones, including Colombia; \$16.9 million has been made available to upgrade the Colombian Air Force OV-10 aircraft \$19.5 million to support Colombian air interdiction programs \$14 million to support and provision Colombia's riverine interdiction program, and \$1 million to support the Colombian navy's counternarcotics intelligence infrastructure.”<sup>36</sup> An effective interdiction program recognizes the value of including partner nations and an additional \$18 million has been made available to support interdiction programs in other countries in South and Central America and the Caribbean, including specifically Bolivia and Ecuador.

The last element of the aid package is assistance for the Colombian National Police. “The total U.S. interagency assistance package includes \$115.6 million to support

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

the CNP. This includes \$26 million for procurement, training, and support for two UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters; \$20.6 million for 12 UH-1H Huey II helicopters; and \$20 million for purchase of Ayers S2R T-65 agricultural spray aircraft and OV-10 aircraft. Funds are also made available for communications equipment, ammunition, spare parts, training, and logistical support.”<sup>37</sup> Assistance for the Colombian National Police completes the architect of Plan Columbia and leads us into the development of functions of the plan.

### **Functions of Plan Colombia**

The components of plan Colombia provided the resources to develop the functions of successful counter narcotics techniques and tactics. Further examination of these techniques, tactics and procedures will provide additional insight into the success of plan Colombia.

### **Training**

Counter narcotic training (CTN) is comprised of several courses. The counter narcotic training is an excellent example of whole government approach. Department Of Defense and interagency resources are utilized in Colombia. The United States Coast Guard (USCG) International Training Department (ITD), Naval Small Craft and Technical Training School (NAVSCIATTS), United States Marine Corps (USMC) and Special Forces conduct numerous Mobile Training Teams (MTT’s), for Colombian CNT forces. Board and Search, Law Enforcement, Operational Planning, Riverine Operations,

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

Small Boat Operator, and Patrol Craft Commander are among the courses taught. This instruction provides critical training and ensures that the Colombian Navy (COLNAV) and Colombian Coast Guard (COLCG) are well trained professional forces that can successfully conduct CNT operations. Maintenance, repair and logistic MTT's are included in this vital function to ensure that equipment; boats and planes are fully operational. The application of teeth and tail (logistical support) is providing the COLNAV/COLCG with the essential tools to succeed in CNT operations.

### **Foreign Military Sales**

The Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program in Colombia is strengthening bilateral relations, and enhancing interoperability between U.S and Colombian forces. Two critical elements to counter narcotic trafficking are detecting and monitoring. The necessary equipment provided by the FMS are Aircraft Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA), Maritime Helicopters, Medium Range/Endurance Surface Ships, Small High Speed Intercept Boats, Coastal Radar Sites, and stations. Building the vertical fight with proper air coverage is critical to successful CNT Operations. The high-speed intercept boats are essential to chase down Go-Fasts while surface ships act as mother ships. Developing this joint concept increases the success rate from approximately 23% to 76%. The importance of command and control platforms and/or long-range intercept vessels also increases the percentage of success. In Colombia, FMS program has provided additional value to the COLNAV/COLCG in all areas of successful maritime interdiction.

### **Port Visits**

The United States Navy port visits provide United States presence, allow sailors and Marines to be ambassadors of goodwill and show the Colombian people that we are interested in fostering stronger ties with them. The desired engagement of U.S. ships must be to schedule foreign port visits regularly to conduct operational exchanges and joint/coalition operations. Recommended actions include operational briefs, ship rider exchanges, and professional exchanges providing experience relating to counter narcotic training and Surface Naval Operations. Community Relation (COMREL) and USAID projects should be scheduled in conjunction with ship visits for additional value.

### **Operations Training & Exercises**

Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) has provided engagement opportunities with Joint-Interagency military and law enforcement teams. The counter narcotic exercises successfully employed in Colombia have provided benefit to Colombian police and military forces. These hard power exercises combine U.S., Drug Enforcement Administration, Customs Border Protection, USCG, and USN with COLNAV, COLCG, Colombian Police, and air assets to conduct counter narcotic operations and exercises. Command, Control, and Communications (C3) procedures are established and exercised. The value of these operations is that the Colombian military and interagency forces work together with U.S. and Coalition forces to conduct Counter narcotic operations.

### **Multinational Exercises**

The challenges of counter narcotic trafficking involve the entire region and using multinational exercises to bring together organizations and nation states to solve real-world problems. Multinational Exercises are instrumental in ensuring interoperability

and cooperation amidst Regional Coalition Partners and U.S. forces. These collaborative efforts provide a unilateral basis for CNT Operations as well as other contingencies such as Disaster Relief, Fighting Transnational Terrorism, and Monitoring WMD. The multinational exercises establish a standing Command and Control structure between coalition partners while strengthening friendships and cooperation between allies and regional partners.

## **USAID**

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is the principal U.S. agency that extends assistance to countries recovering from disaster, trying to escape poverty, and engaging in democratic reforms. USAID is an independent federal agency that receives foreign policy guidance from the Secretary of State. This assistance provides economic, development, and humanitarian assistance that provides additional value to foreign policy goals of the United States. The acceptance of USAID's soft power programs increases engagement opportunity with most nations. Successful commitments with Colombian and International Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and USAID promote U.S. objectives. Effective governance is the cornerstone for economic development in Colombia and provides an alternative to support for Narcoterrorism.

USAID engagement with Colombian NGOs increases educational opportunities. Funding provides additional opportunities for renovation and construction of schools in impoverished areas. This promotes educational and job training, which in turn shapes an alternative economy.

USAID sponsors community relation (COMREL) projects by means of ship visits. The ship's crew provide assistance in building and repairing neglected schools

and/or job training centers. The program, Project Handclasp, collects and distributes donations of equipment, books and other materials in addition to medical supplies. “In August, 2007 the USNS COMFORT (a Naval Hospital Ship) spent a week in Buenaventura, Colombia providing medical and humanitarian assistance. This visit provided medical care, training, supplies as well as construction projects to the local infrastructure and schools in the area.”<sup>38</sup> The visit highlighted the cooperation between the U.S and Colombian governments.

### **Nation Building and Legal Agreements**

A new criminal code modeled after United States procedures have strengthened and improved the efficiency of the Colombian legal system. The U.S. Department of Justice, with representatives from the Judge Advocate Group (JAG) lawyers, has provided training in Colombia for the Colombian Justice Department, court and military legal systems. The additional assistance has improved the rule of law and the judicial application in various legal systems has had positive effect. This soft power engagement can reduce levels of corruption with increased levels of transparency. “In 1997, Colombia and the U.S. signed a Maritime ship boarding Agreement: a highly successful arrangement that provides faster approval to board ships in international waters and has facilitated improved counternarcotics cooperation between the COLNAV and USCG.”<sup>39</sup>

Colombia’s aggressive posture is exemplified by the enactment of several laws that greatly impede narcotic traffickers. Developing critical requirements such as

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<sup>38</sup> Hall, Jeff, USNS Comfort Public Affairs, “Comfort Bids Colombia Farewell”, August 29, 2007, available at: [http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story\\_id=31537](http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story_id=31537), (accessed 12 December 2008).

<sup>39</sup> U.S. DOS, *Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affair*, Volume I, p. 213.

outboard motors to be serialized and registered and all passengers who depart on Colombian Merchant and fishing vessels (FV) must be registered. It is illegal to make crew changes while out to sea, thus limiting at sea transfers and transnational narcoterrorism options. The most important legal agreement between the Government of Colombia and the U.S. is an extradition treaty. Narcoterrorists / drug traffickers can be brought to justice in the U.S. and serve time in U.S. prisons. The application of the extradition treaty has proven to be a powerful tool in drug enforcement operations.

The shared goals of Colombia and the United States for Plan Colombia are related but differ slightly. The United States primary goal is to stop the flow of illegal drugs from Colombia to the United States. This includes promoting regional stability by assisting Colombia in developing economically and achieving peace. Colombia's goals are to promote peace and economic development, increase national security and end drug trafficking. Did the six-year plan achieve its goals of ending drug trafficking and stopping the flow of drugs from Colombia to the United States? Plan Colombia: A progress report, CRS 32774 states:

Measurable progress in Colombia's internal security has been made, as indicated by decreases in violence and the eradication of drug crops. After many years of stable prices, purity, and availability of cocaine and heroin in the United States, prices for both drugs have increased, whereas purity and availability have decreased. Military operations against illegally armed groups have intensified, but the main leftist guerrilla group seems no closer to agreeing to a cease-fire. The demobilization of rightist paramilitary fighters is proceeding, but it is doing so amid controversy with regard to its implementation.<sup>40</sup>

This is just one of many independent observations that indicate significant progress has been achieved. The goal of stopping the flow of drugs from Colombia to the United



States has not been realized. The vision of stopping drug trafficking, although not obtained in the six-year plan, still exists and is being executed in the current “Strategy for Strengthening Democracy and Promoting Social Development”. “The “Strategy for Strengthening Democracy and Promoting Social Development” continues the successful counter-terror, counter-drug, democracy, human rights, alternative development, and humanitarian policies developed and implemented under Plan Colombia.”<sup>41</sup> The above quote from the former ambassador to Colombia, Ann Patterson, begins the analysis of further exploring Colombia’s success.

### **Strategy for Strengthening Democracy and Promoting Social Development**

Ambassador Patterson has extensive regional experience as the former ambassador to Colombia from 2000 to 2003, including a tour, as the former ambassador to El Salvador from 1997 to 2000 and readily testifies that, “Colombia is not the same country it was less than 10 years ago”<sup>42</sup>. President Uribe, his administration, and Colombians at all levels, have made remarkable progress against the drug lords including the FARC and reducing their profit margins. The advancement of President Uribe’s plan Strategy for Strengthening Democracy and Promoting Social Development, a six year plan, (2007-2013) has promoted success against a myriad of problems related to drug trafficking,

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<sup>40</sup> U.S. Congressional Research Service. Foreign Affairs and Trade Division. *Plan Colombia: A progress report*, CRS 32774 January 2006, by Connie Veillette. U.S. Congressional Research Service. Library of Congress. 2006.

<sup>41</sup> U.S. Department of State. Fact Sheet. “Counternarcotics Strategy in Colombia” <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/rm/83654.htm> (accessed 24 November 2008).

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

“including deep-seated political conflicts, social exclusion, economic inequality, endemic violence, and corruption”<sup>43</sup>. Colombia is aggressively pursuing these problems in an exemplary way that signals to the entire region that progress is possible against narco-trafficking and the related problems. The "Strategy for Strengthening Democracy and Promoting Social Development is securing the progress Colombia has made but will require a sustained commitment from the United States and the international community as Colombia assumes greater responsibility for its counternarcotics effort. A formidable tool to assist Columbia is the United States-Colombia Free Trade Agreement. This agreement is considered “essential to our National Security.”<sup>44</sup>

Ambassador Patterson provided this insight from Deputy Assistant Secretary Shapiro “the free trade agreement we have negotiated with Colombia will reinforce our counternarcotics strategy by generating jobs in Colombia’s legitimate economy.”<sup>45</sup> President Bush realizes the value in passing the free trade agreement and continues to urge Congress to pass the agreement, however at this juncture it is very unlikely that Incoming President Obama will have to address the challenge. Columbia’s progress and success is evident by the analytical review of quantitative measures.

Certainly one of the best metrics of success is a reduction of use and especially in America’s youth. Ambassador Patterson in 2007 presented this significant testimony illustrating this element of success: “The rate of U.S. cocaine consumption for youth, according to the Monitoring the Future Survey, has declined by 10 percent since 2001, and overall drug use by 23 percent,”<sup>46</sup>. This element of success is an indicator for the

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> White House Fact Sheet. “U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement Essential to National Security” <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/03/20080312-3.html>, (accessed 9 December 2008).

<sup>45</sup> U.S. Department of State. Fact Sheet. “Counternarcotics Strategy in Colombia” : <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/rm/83654.htm>, (accessed 24 November 2008).

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

demand reduction strategy for the United States and Colombia. It represents fewer Narco-dollars returning to Colombia and destabilizing the country's economy and security. A victory on the supply side strategy for counter-narcotics in Colombia would be the eradication programs.

“which sprayed or manually eradicated over 200,000 hectares of coca in 2006, kept about 320 metric tons of cocaine from reaching the United States and Europe. Coupled with the seizure of 178 metric tons of Colombian cocaine and cocaine base in the same time period, and calculating an average price within Colombia of \$1,700 per kilo, our joint efforts have taken about \$850 million in one year out of the hands of drug trafficking organizations. Aerial eradication alone accounted for slightly more than half of that value. This may help explain why the FARC are reportedly under financial pressure and slow in paying their coca growers.”<sup>47</sup>

Ambassador Patterson provides support for this analysis with her observation on Plan Colombia: “It has helped establish security in the countryside, contributed to strong economic growth, and fostered public confidence in Colombian governmental institutions. Since 2001, Colombia's cocaine production has declined by 22 percent, and seizures of cocaine bound for the United States have increased by two thirds, to 178 metric tons in 2006.”<sup>48</sup> Colombia has increased its own funding to ensure its security. Starting in July 2002, near the end of the Pastrana administration, “181,000 uniformed military and 97,000 police were active. By February 2007, those ranks had grown to 251,000 military and 134,000 police, for an increase of 38 percent during the Uribe administration. For the next stage of consolidation, Colombia plans to add over 16,000 army, navy and air force personnel and 20,000 police.”<sup>49</sup> This is a 44 percent increase

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

targeting needed national security and provides the springboard for Colombian Nationalism.

### **Nationalism**

Colombia due to the Air Bridge Denial program has been able to regain its sovereignty over its skies. The Air Bridge Denial program, for example, was nationalized in FY 2008 and represents one of the most successful programs in Colombian counter-narcotics strategy. “It completed its third year of operations in 2006, and the number of illegal flights over Colombia has decreased significantly. In 2003, there were 637 suspected and known illegal flights over Colombia. In 2006, there were only 171, a decrease of 73 percent.”<sup>50</sup> The Colombia government now exercises control over its airspace, denying drug traffickers an important means of transporting drugs, cash, and materials. This success is a positive indicator but does it signal a capacity that is not yet mature enough for transition?

Ambassador Patterson recommends caution in nationalizing programs before the Government of Colombia is ready to fund and manage them. Ambassador Patterson urges a gradual transition that provides Colombia opportunity to implement the new strategy. This reduces the risk of not being able to sustain the counter-narcotic capabilities developed at this time. Discussions have started to begin reductions in U.S. assistance. The plan is to reduce eradication and interdiction support in unison with the “Strategy for Strengthening Democracy and Promoting Social Development” between 2009 and 2013 in a graduated manner. “For institutional, social, and economic development programs, the plan is to initially increase funding and then hold that

investment essentially flat. The result over time will be a greater percentage of U.S. assistance supporting soft-side programs.”<sup>51</sup> The successes in both demand and supply reduction programs are also evident to the Colombian people, as quantified by polls from major cities, the data:

“show that 60 to 80 percent of the population approve of President Uribe’s management of drug trafficking issues. In a February 2007 poll, 72 percent approved of Plan Colombia, 73 percent felt the Uribe administration respects human rights, and 71 percent felt the country was more secure than a year ago. 76 percent held a positive view of the Colombian military forces, and 69 percent approved of the National Police -- a tie with the Catholic Church.”<sup>52</sup>

The successes have generated the opportunity for increased assistance to soft-side programs such as USAID alternative development projects.

The goal of USAID/Colombia’s Alternative Development Program is to support “GOC efforts to strengthen the licit economy through productive projects, enterprise development, natural resource protection, institutional strengthening, and promoting access to markets.”<sup>53</sup> These projects also complement interdiction and eradication programs by opening up new, legal economic opportunities instead of growing coca and poppy. Nearly one third of the Colombia counternarcotics budget is spent on alternative development and related developmental programs. Joint U.S. and Government of Colombia efforts are encouraging growers to abandon the production of illicit crops. U.S. - financed programs have supported the cultivation of over “158,000 hectares (390,382

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> USAID “Colombia Country Profile”[http://www.usaid.gov/locations/latin\\_america\\_caribbean/country/colombia/](http://www.usaid.gov/locations/latin_america_caribbean/country/colombia/), (accessed 11 December 2008).

acres) of licit crops”<sup>54</sup> and completed “1,117 social and productive infrastructure projects in the last five years. More than 81,700 families in 17 departments have benefited from these programs. In addition, to ensure that Colombians are provided with alternatives, the United States has worked with Colombia's private sector to create an additional 53,000 full-time equivalent jobs.”<sup>55</sup> The private sector is solicited to expand economic opportunities providing long-term alternatives to illicit crop production. Starting at the grass root level, the goal is to improve effectiveness of municipal governments, expand access to markets, and promote growth in targeted regions. In addition, USAID works with the Government of Colombia (GOC) to facilitate the creation and effective implementation of modern laws and policies to promote trade and strengthen economic competitiveness. The advancements from Plan Colombia and the follow on plan Strategy for Strengthening Democracy and Promoting Social Development have beyond a doubt been instrumental in the improvements in Colombia. These plans have also produced some criticisms that need to be examined.

### **Criticism of Plan Colombia**

The roots of criticism for Plan Colombia can be found even before the conception of the plan. Some critics use a RAND study released in 1988 titled “Sealing the Borders: The Effects of Increased Military Participation in Drug Interdiction” as a starting point for their analysis. The conclusions of the 175-page report by seven economists,

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> U.S. Department of State. Fact Sheet. “Counternarcotics Strategy in Colombia” <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/rm/83654.htm>, (accessed 24 November 2008).

researchers and mathematicians are centered on the utilization of U.S. military resources to interdict drugs coming into the United States that would have little to no effect on cocaine traffic. The time span of 20 years has shown that effective interdiction is possible when a synergy between DOD resources and law enforcement is developed. An analysis of this report reveals no research in the report between the integration of law enforcement intelligence with military resources and is the primary reason that the interdiction results are so low. The report at that time indicates interdiction results of four percent with the United States Coast Guard. The Joint Interagency Task Force South regularly reports interdiction results higher than twenty percent. Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) has tasked the Joint Interagency Task Force South with the goal of forty percent. This goal of forty percent is the target that ONDCP believes will disrupt the business model of the drug traffickers. This goal is certainly an indicator that the supply side line of attack is a valuable tool in the counter-narcotics strategy. The other most often cited criticisms of Plan Colombia are human rights violations and the linkage between guerrillas and oil.

### **Guerrillas and Oil**

Criticism of Plan Colombia includes the suggestion that the intent is not drug eradication. Proponents of this ideal would assert that the true intent is to fight leftist guerrillas and include authors Francisco Ramirez Cuellar and Doug Stokes. "They argue that these Colombian peasants are also a target because they are calling for social reform and hindering international plans to exploit Colombia's valuable resources, including oil

and other natural resources.”<sup>56</sup> Since 2004, Colombia is in the top fifteenth supplier of oil to the United States. There are indications that the ranking “could potentially rise if petroleum extraction could be conducted in a more secure environment. From 1986 to 1997 there were nearly 79 million barrels of crude oil spilled in pipeline attacks.”<sup>57</sup> That assessment is correct. In 2008 Colombia was thirteen from the fifteenth in 2004. All indicators point to the fact national security has increased in Colombia in recent years. The assistance of Plan Colombia is counter-narcotics but critics such as filmmaker Gerard Ungeman “argues it will be used primarily against the FARC.”<sup>58</sup> The counter argument from supporters of the Plan U.S. and the Colombian government including Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs is that “the distinction between guerrillas, paramilitaries and drug dealers may have increasingly become irrelevant, seeing as they could be considered as part of the same productive chain.”<sup>59</sup> There is ample evidence that the FARC are involved in narcotic operations and critics find it hard to refute the fact. The result is that counternarcotics equipment and assistance is used against guerrillas, paramilitaries and drug dealers. The application of counternarcotics operations has provided critics with concerns on human rights conditions.

## Human Rights

A leading critic is Amnesty International, which issued a press release in June 2000 that criticized Plan Colombia:

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<sup>56</sup> Ungerman, Gerard. *Plan Colombia: Cashing in on the Drug War Failure* [DVD]. Cinema Libre.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.



“Plan Colombia is based on a drug-focussed analysis of the roots of the conflict and the human rights crisis which completely ignores the Colombian state=s own historical and current responsibility. It also ignores deep- rooted causes of the conflict and the human rights crisis. The Plan proposes a principally military strategy (in the US component of Plan Colombia) to tackle illicit drug cultivation and trafficking through substantial military assistance to the Colombian armed forces and police. Social development and humanitarian assistance programs included in the Plan cannot disguise its essentially military character. Furthermore, it is apparent that Plan Colombia is not the result of a genuine process of consultation either with the national and international non-governmental organizations which are expected to implement the projects nor with the beneficiaries of the humanitarian, human rights or social development projects. As a consequence, the human rights component of Plan Colombia is seriously flawed.”<sup>60</sup>

Human rights in Latin America begin to improve for the most part during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and continue to be a challenge. Colombia is no exception to this history and faces a poor economy with few available jobs, an inefficient judicial system, human rights abuses, widespread corruption, and armed conflict with insurgent groups operating within its national borders. The concerns of most critics target the distribution of assistance.

Stephen Johnson, a Senior Policy Analyst at the Heritage Foundation echos Amnesty

International interests:

Stephen Johnson, a Senior Policy Analyst for Latin America at the Heritage Foundation, argues that the key to resolving Colombia’s problems is to secure the uncontrolled areas of the country, strengthen public institutions and to establish the rule of law in previously ungoverned areas. In his opinion, money spent on crop substitution programs (\$312 million by end of 2003 as compared to \$143 million to strengthen institutions) would be better spent on strengthening the judicial systems and expanding public services into the neglected areas of rural Colombia. According to Mr. Johnson, additional financial emphasis on public institutions will enable Colombia to better bear its own burden in the future.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Amnesty International. (June 2000) Colombia: Amnesty International's position on Plan Colombia (accessed 24 November 2008).  
<http://www.amnestyusa.org/document.php?id=176E15103DA508248025691200558394&lang=e>,

<sup>61</sup> Stephen Johnson, “Restructure Aid to Colombia,” *The Heritage Foundation Reports*, 23 May 2003, available from Lexis-Nexis; accessed on 24 Nov08.

The critics and proponents of Plan Colombia are in agreement that it is resource distribution that is the foundation of their disagreements. Can there be improvement with the centric police and military distribution assistance dominated plan?

The majority of contributions by the U.S. to Colombia are for military and police support but a holistic approach is evident. Plan Colombia provides resources of over 200 million directed to social and humanitarian efforts. Is the balance “good enough” to achieve improvement? The Colombian national problems of economy, judicial system, human rights, widespread corruption, and armed conflict have seen improvements. One metric of progression is the non-government organization Freedom House. The gain recorded by Freedom House, a proponent for democracy and freedom, applies an analysis to determine and rank countries on a freedom index. In 2000, Colombia was ranked 4th and partly free. In 2008 the ranking has improved to 3rd and still partly free. A small increase but it is an indicator that Colombia is making progress. A large impediment to Colombia’s progress is the FARC an insurgent group located within Colombia.

## **FARC**

In Colombia, without a doubt, the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) Revolutionary armed forces of Colombia are the largest and the leading narco terrorist group in Colombia. The following is an examination of the FARC insurgency and its role in cocaine trafficking that fuels the narco pipeline from Colombia to West Africa. West Africa is not a significant producer of cocaine or other hard drugs but it is an increasingly important jump off point for maritime trans-shipment of narcotics to North Atlantic markets. The evidence of increased seizures in West Africa of Latin American cocaine and Asian heroin indicate a major trans-shipment hub to Europe and

North America. African statistics are not readily available or reported. As an example, the United Nations World Drug reports indicate that less than 50% of African nations return the annual surveys to the U.N. The latest report shows: “Between 1999 and 2004, UN Office on Drugs and Crime statistics indicate that the region accounted for over 70% of all cocaine, averaging 1679 kg per year, almost half of all heroin, 150 kg per year, and 31% of all cannabis over 400 tons seizures in Africa.”<sup>62</sup> The United Nations World Drug report for 2008 on markets echoes this trend:

The recent increases in both seizures and use in West Africa appear to reflect the development of new distribution routes through West Africa to Western Europe. This has led to a large increase in seizures in both regions. Consumption continues to increase both at destination and along the route. A contraction in the consumer markets of North America has led to a strong decline in seizures in North America. In the USA, the proportion of the workforce testing positive for cocaine declined by 19% in 2007, and by 36% since 1998. Cocaine use, however, continues to increase in South America.<sup>63</sup>

The reference to the decline of seizures and positive tests is not directly related to the FARC. The analysis of this fact should be considered as one indicator of why West Africa is becoming a trans-shipment hub to Europe. This assessment of the FARC will center on its history, threat to Columbia, funding sources and the recent setbacks encountered.

## **History**

The foundations of guerilla unrest in Colombia arise from the social inequality and political oppression that plague many countries of South America.

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<sup>62</sup> Praeger security international [HTTP://PS my.Praeger.com/POC.aspx? q= cocaine + and + % 22 W. + Africa % 22& new search = 1&](http://PS.my.Praeger.com/POC.aspx?q=cocaine+and+%22W.+Africa%22&newsearch=1) (accessed 9/22/ 2008).

<sup>63</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report 2008* June 2008 pg.18.

The major guerrilla organization, the FARC is part of this tradition. The FARC leader, Manuel Marulanda Velez, better known as Tirofijo (“Sureshot”), began his guerrilla career in 1949 when he joined a Liberal guerrilla band in the department of Tolima, an epicenter of the violence. In 1964, Marulanda helped to establish a Communist-oriented “independent republic” in Marquetalia, a remote area in southern Tolima. I was one of several “republics” established by Communist-oriented guerrillas in southern Colombia. Marulanda escaped when the Colombian army attacked and destroyed the Marquetalia guerrilla group in June 1964. In 1966, the Communist guerrillas, denominated “Communist self-defense forces,” were reorganized as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), with Marulanda as Chief of Staff.<sup>64</sup>

This Colombian insurgency is one of the longest running in world history at just over 40 years. The FARC “in its view, traced its roots to the tradition of Colombian agrarian struggle that started in the 1920s.”<sup>65</sup> The FARC has capitalized on the years moving from a small peasant organization to the largest, most capable, and best equipped guerrilla organization in Latin America. Expanding beyond Latin America, the FARC on the world stage is certainly one of the best-equipped and capable guerrilla organizations.

The FARC’s early beginnings and first successes were very modest. The FARC’s initial goal, as with all beginning insurgencies, was simply survival. Initial efforts targeted farms and the Colombian military to gain weapons, equipment, food, and essential supplies. “In this formative period the FARC began to take on the accoutrements of an army by wearing uniforms and insignia and establishing a code with severe punishments for Banditry crimes of passion, and informing.”<sup>66</sup> The FARC’s initial successes did produce growth “from 350 fighters at its founding in 1966 to

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<sup>64</sup> Angel Rabasa & Peter Chalk *Colombian Labyrinth*: (Santa Monica CA. RAND 2001) 23.

<sup>65</sup> Fabiano Sanchez, Andres Solimano, and Mickel Formisano, *Conflict Violent Crime and Criminal Activity in Colombia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, November 2002).

<sup>66</sup> Rabasa and Chalk, 24.

approximately 3600 in 1986, 7000 in 1995, and 15,000-20,000 in 2000”.<sup>67</sup> “The long-term goal was the creation of a force of 30,000, which in the FARC's estimation, then enabled the organization to engage in large-scale offensive operations against the main units of the Colombian army.”<sup>68</sup> The growth of any organization requires additional resources and funding. Examining the FARC's funding stream is interesting.

## **Funding**

The FARC's goal of expansion to 30,000 guerrillas required a significant funding stream. In order to attain this goal a consensus was reached in 1982, when the FARC held its seventh guerrilla conference, it was stated that the resources necessary to develop its “strategic plan” could be acquired by any means possible. This tenet would be the launch platform to enter the illegal narcotics trade. Throughout the 1970's FARC resources were usually acquired through the kidnapping and extortion (FARC Taxes) of Colombian landlords and prominent business people. This included the exploitation of regional commodities such as oil, coal, gold and emeralds with FARC taxes. In 1982 elements of the illicit drug industry, specifically the cultivation of coca and poppy, were entering some FARC controlled regions. “The policy of taxing the drug industry and mobilizing and recruiting people in the lower end of the drug business was laid out formally in the

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid. 26.

<sup>68</sup> Karl Penhaul, “Colombian Rebels Map Out Plan To Topple Government ”News Agency Colombia, January 14, 1999. David Spencer, FARC Warfare Strategy And Tactics 1996-1999, unpublished manuscript.

unpublished conclusions of the FARC Seventh Conference.”<sup>69</sup> The taxes paid for protection from the abuses of narco-traffickers as well as from police.

From the late 1990s, as the war against their right-wing paramilitary foes became economic as well as military, the FARC began to take direct control of the business, buying up coca base and establishing a monopoly on cultivation of coca, the raw material for cocaine. The effect was to deny drug income to their rivals and ensure the peasants that grow the drugs - who form an important part of the FARC's support base - got good prices from the traffickers. This led to the FARC trading cocaine directly for arms or money, but within the country. Since extradition warrants against certain FARC leaders on drugs trafficking charges were issued in 2002, the guerrillas have decided they have little to lose and are seeking to maximize revenue from drugs by becoming involved in international export.<sup>70</sup>

A report from Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Center estimates the percentage as high as 75% of FARC revenue. What quantity does 75% equate to: “A confidential government report prepared for President Uribe and the Joint Intelligence Committee (Junta de Inteligencia Conjunta: JIC) - entitled *An Approximation of the income and expenditure of the FARC in 2003 based on intelligence information* - put the FARC's income at up to USD1.36 billion.”<sup>71</sup> This impressive amount is a leading factor as to why the FARC is the best equipped, trained and organized guerrilla organization in Latin America. However and equally more impressive, considering the financial resources at the FARC's control, between 2002 and mid-2008 the FARC has suffered a series of setbacks as a result of a concerted counter-insurgency strategy led by the government of President

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<sup>69</sup> Rabasa and Chalk, 26.

<sup>70</sup> Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre, Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC)- 16-Dec-2005, (accessed 9-20-08).

<sup>71</sup> Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre, Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC)- 23-Sept-2008, (accessed 9-25-08).

Ivaro Uribe and Colombia's security forces. Could these set backs lead to the demise of the FARC?

### **FARC Demise**

President Uribe's success in combating the FARC insurgency during his presidential term is certainly evident by the diminished guerrilla strength of the FARC. "While the strength of the FARC is believed by the authorities to have been reduced from some 16,000 insurgents at the start of the Uribe presidency to some 7,000 currently."<sup>72</sup> What are some of the recent events that are impacting the FARC's current predicament and what are future possible outcomes?

There have been three significant events in 2008 that have greatly affected the FARC. The most recent occurred on July 2, when Colombian army troops conducted a well-run and bloodless hostage rescue without United States aid. "The success of the hostage rescue allowed President Alvaro Uribe and Colombia's military to claim political credit for engineering an operation that evokes other historic landmark hostage rescues, such as Israel's Entebbe airport raid in 1976 or the Peruvian raid on the Japanese Embassy residence in Lima in 1996."<sup>73</sup> Certainly of interest to the United States the hostages included three United States contractors, until the time of the rescue, the longest held American hostages in United States history. "The ingenuity of the military operation amounts to a public relations disaster for the FARC, and marks the climax of a series of severe blows to the organization that suggests Latin America's longest running

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre, Fight the Future-The beginning of the end for the FARC? 14-Aug-2008, (accessed 9-23-08).

insurgency may soon become history.”<sup>74</sup> The twenty-two minute operation (Operation Jaque) consisted of a year long preparation that culminated in penetrating the FARC communication system and sending them false messages supposedly from members of the FARC’s ruling Secretariat. The messages directed the insurgents to combine three separate groups of hostages to one location where they would be collected by two helicopters purporting to be from a sympathetic humanitarian organization. “The operation demonstrates the Colombian security forces increasing capabilities after receiving several billion dollars worth of mostly military aid from the United States since 2000, and following an intensified period of cooperation with the United Kingdom and Israeli intelligence.”<sup>75</sup>

“Probably the most important strategic insight to come to light as a result of the success of Operation Jaque is that it is now clear internal communications within the FARC structure have deteriorated markedly as a consequence of the progressive implementation of the Colombian governments counter insurgency strategy over the past five years.”<sup>76</sup> Politically, Operation Jaque was of significant value to President Uribe and a blow to President Chavez who was heavily involved in negotiating the release of the hostages. The recent successes of the Colombian government have not all been bloodless.

“On March 1st, in an operation led by the police intelligence unit (Direccion de Inteligencia Policial: DIPOL), Colombian security forces killed the FARC’s de facto second-in-command (Raul Reyes) and 24 other individuals in a cross-border raid on a

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.



jungle camp inside Ecuador.”<sup>77</sup> The success of this raid also signified the first time in the FARC's history that the Colombian government was capable of eliminating the highest FARC leadership echelon. The raid also resulted in a windfall of intelligence.

“Some of the Reyes computer documents that have been declassified underscore the view that the FARC is experiencing serious difficulties and internal problems that suggests the organization will struggle to recover from its present state. These problems include concerns among Secretariat members and mid-level commanders over increasingly stealthy military pursuits, communication difficulties, warnings to use radio equipment for only short messages because of the risk of interception, difficulties in executing operations across the country increased levels of desertions and demoralization from combat casualties.”<sup>78</sup>

Reyes's killing would soon be followed by the loss of two more members of the Secretariat. The Secretariat is the leadership Council and is comprised of seven members and the FARC has suffered an almost 50% loss in the span of a few months. The reduction in leadership is mimicked at the grassroots level with a similar 50% decrease of guerrilla fighters from 18,000 to 7000. How bleak is the FARC's future?

The reduction to 7000, if that figure is correct, is significant. However, 7000 still represents a significant combat force and is certainly greater than the beginning number of 350 in 1964. As of this writing there have been other significant Colombian government successes but the FARC has not been forced to the negotiating table. The Colombian government victories have not precluded access to the vital financing of the cocaine trade. The billion-dollar funding stream of illegal narcotics is, at this point in time, far too lucrative to walk away from. One viewpoint from conflict analyst Joaquin Villalobos “there is unlikely to be a formal end to the conflict through negotiations because of the FARC's lack of unified leadership. Rather, he says, Colombia is more

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

likely to see a gradual “fading away “of the conflict.”<sup>79</sup> In conclusion I agree with his viewpoint and add the further analysis that the Colombian government, instead of fighting an insurgency, will soon be combating a narcotic criminal organization.

### **Combatant Command (COCOM’S)**

Africa is the world’s second-largest continent and consists of 53 countries housing the globe's second greatest population. Using the definition of continental regions and sub-regions in use by the United Nations, West Africa consists of 17 countries and Northern Africa 7 countries. Research and analysis at this time indicates that of these 24 countries that 3 from Northern and 10 from Western African have been used as trans-national hubs or at risk for development for trans-national narco-trafficking statistical purposes. The complexity of narco-trafficking in the trans-national arena involves many organizations but without a doubt 5 of these organizations are especially vital to review in the role of counter narcotic trafficking. A background and discussion on roles and capacity of the following 5 organizations: Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATFS) Joint Operations Area (JOA) and the three United States Combatant Commands (COCOMs), Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), European Command (EUCOM), African Command (AFRICOM) and the emergent The Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N) will be essential in the development of counter-narcotic planning and engagements. The Joint Interagency Task Force South is the hinge pin within these organizations. JIATF-S’s area of responsibility a 42 million-square-mile is 5 times larger then the United States and borders on 5 Unified Combatant

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

Commands of particular interest are the COCOMs, SOUTHCOM, AFRICOM, and EUCOM.

### **Joint Interagency Task Force South**

In the last 20 years, the Joint Interagency Task Force-South has developed into a model agency of collaboration and cooperation with a network of intelligence, law enforcement, and military resources that focus on detecting the movements and shipments of narco-terrorist organizations. This capacity is certainly narcotic centric but JIATF-S has evolved with the threats that the United States faces and can bring National and Partner Nation assets on international terrorism or weapons proliferation.

Two of the most visible key elements of organizational success at JIATF-S are unity of command and integration within the organization. In the JIATF-S structure, representatives from DOD, Homeland Security, and the Justice Department, along with U.S. Intelligence Community liaisons and international partners, work as one team for one boss; the Director of JIATF-S is a U.S. Coast Guard two star Admiral. The integration of interagency personnel in the command structure and ensuring they serve in key leadership positions promotes trust. This facilitates the sharing of law enforcement investigative information, which is critical for any intelligence-driven organization.

This integration begins at the top levels and extends throughout the command. As mentioned earlier the Director's position is a Coast Guard Rear Admiral, the Vice Director is from Customs and Border Protection (CBP). In the lower levels of the command: both the Directors for Intelligence and Operations are military officers, but

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their Deputies are from the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and Customs and Border Protection. Integration continues in the Joint Operations Center (JOC) watch floor with Customs Border Protection agents working and standing watch with DOD counterparts. Intelligence analysts from the DEA, CBP, and FBI are located in the Joint Intelligence Operations Center to ensure that law enforcement agencies are involved in daily operations and that information is disseminated, analyzed and used in the daily targeting meeting.

### **Southern Command**

U.S. Southern Command Area of Focus encompasses 32 countries and 10 territories. The region represents about one-sixth of the landmass of the world assigned to regional unified commands.<sup>80</sup> A bullet mission summary of SOUTHCOM's mission statement would be protecting the "Southern Approach." The Command's official mission statement: "is to conduct military operations and promote security cooperation to achieve U.S. strategic objectives."<sup>81</sup> The U.S. Southern Command is realistic and it is reflected in the vision statement: "An interagency oriented organization seeking to support security and stability in the Americas."<sup>82</sup> The reality of less apportioned forces and a smaller budget than other regional combatant commands has developed a great appreciation in SOUTHCOM for the importance of interagency partnership and innovative security cooperation practices. SOUTHCOM certainly recognizes that the

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> U.S. Southern Command "Adm. Stravrids speech to Surface Navy Association." <http://www.southcom.mil/AppsSC/transcripts.php?year=2008>, (accessed Jan 14 2009).

<sup>81</sup> U.S. Southern Command. "Our Mission." <http://www.southcom.mil/AppsSC/pages/ourMission.php>, (accessed Jan 14 2009).

nesting of the Joint Interagency Task Force South, the model agency for interagency cooperation and collaboration is the path forward for the whole government approach. SOUTHCOM's commander, Admiral James Stavridis, is innovative and has reorganized the Southern Command from the traditional Combatant J-code to a 21<sup>st</sup> century organization that will encompass the whole government approach. The Southern Command has turned this whole government approach to combating one of its most visible focus areas, Counter Drug and Counter Narcoterrorism. Adm. Stavridis consistently hails the Key West, FL.-based Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-S) "as the epitome of interagency cooperation and has called them "the future of dealing with challenges in the region,"<sup>83</sup> and has position JIATF-S as the spearhead for Southern Command engagement of Counter Drug and Narcoterrorism.

### **African Command**

The Africa Command is the newest (officially standing up in October 2008) and the sixth geographic unified command in the United States Department of Defense inventory. The mission statement of the United States AFRICOM is comparable to SOUTHCOM's mission statement: "in concert with other U.S. government agencies and international partners, conducts sustained security engagement through military-to-military programs, military-sponsored activities, and other military operations as directed to promote a stable and secure African environment in support of U.S. foreign

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> U.S. Southern Command. "Counter Drug Counter Narcoterrorism."  
<http://www.southcom.mil/AppsSC/pages/counterNarco.php>, (accessed Jan 14 2009).

policy.”<sup>84</sup> Besides the mission statement, there are other parallels between the two commands.

AFRICOM shares some similarities with SOUTHCOM; they both share the trials of being resource challenged. AFRICOM shares the reality of its sister combatant command of very few apportioned forces, essentially zero at this time and also a smaller budget than other regional combatant commands. It, like SOUTHCOM, has developed a great appreciation for the importance of interagency partnership and innovative security cooperation practices. General Ward, Commander, AFRICOM, recognizes the value of restructuring. AFRICOM, like SOUTHCOM, will not have the traditional J-code combatant structure. President Bush comments on its uniqueness:

“this is a unique command structure for America. It is a command structure that is aiming to help provide military assistance to African nations, so African nations are more capable of dealing with Africa's conflicts -- like peacekeeping training. Obviously, we've got an issue in Darfur, that we've got to all work together to solve. And I'm very pleased that the AU and U.N. hybrid force should be moving in there. I'd like to see it moving quicker, but the whole purpose of AFRICOM is to help leaders deal with African problems.”<sup>85</sup>

AFRICOM's unique organizational structure begins at the top with “two co-equal deputies – a civilian deputy and a military deputy. The DCMA's military counterpart is the Deputy to the Commander for Military Operations (DCMO).”<sup>86</sup> Ambassador Mary Carlin Yates is a senior United States diplomat with extensive experience in Africa starting in 1991. Ambassador Yates, as the Deputy, “directs the command's plans and

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<sup>84</sup> U.S. Africa Command.”ARRICOM FAQ's” <http://www.africom.mil/AboutAFRICOM.asp>, (accessed Jan 15 2009).

<sup>85</sup> U.S. Africa Command.”TRANSCRIPT: President Bush Stresses No AFRICOM Bases, No 'Zero-Sum' With China ” <http://www.africom.mil/getArticle.asp?art=1650>, (accessed Jan 15 2009).

programs associated with health, humanitarian assistance and de-mining action, disaster response, security sector reform, and Peace Support Operations. She also directs Outreach, Strategic Communication and AFRICOM's partner-building functions, as well as assuring that policy development and implementation are consistent with U.S. Foreign Policy.”<sup>87</sup> The addition and integration of Ambassador Yates in the senior level command structure is value added and reflects a whole of government approach to challenges in Africa. The assignment of General Ward (former Deputy) and Ambassador (former Pol/Mil advisor) Yates from EUCOM to AFRICOM provides a synergy between the two commands.

### **European Command**

The mission of the European Command is as follows: “USEUCOM will maintain ready forces to conduct the full range of operations unilaterally or in concert with coalition partners; enhance transatlantic security through support of NATO; promote regional stability; counter terrorism; and advance U.S. interests in the area of responsibility.”<sup>88</sup> AFRICOM and EUCOM share similar mission statements yet neither address in their statements, vision, or area focus, which specifically identify the challenge of counter narcotics. SOUTHCOM is very aware of how illicit narcotics’ trafficking promotes regional instability. It is arguable that as the narco-pipeline continues to West Africa for transshipment to primarily Europe, that future mission statements, vision or

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<sup>86</sup> U.S. Africa Command. “Ambassador Mary Carlin Yates” <http://www.africom.mil/yates.asp>, (accessed Jan 15 2009).

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> United States European Command. “Command Mission”, <http://www.eucom.mil/english/Command/mission.asp>, (accessed 21 Jan 09).

areas of focus of these commands will address the developing narcotic insurgency problems. The following excerpt supports this analysis:

The hearing held this week on AFRICOM by the House Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs brings back to light the growing layers of opportunity and concern in Africa and other developing regions. While dealing simultaneously with both strategic interests and security concerns in specific regions of interest has always posed challenges, overlap between strategic interests and the impact of illicit drugs has never gained a large degree of attention.<sup>89</sup>

This analysis will be further explored, but before beginning that dialogue one additional organization will be examined.

### **Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N)**

Spain is the major gateway to Europe for cocaine coming from Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador. Europeans are aware of this critical vulnerability and have recently established a multi-partner organization to address this growing challenge. “The Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre, based in Lisbon, is designed as an international task force to collect and analyse information on drug trafficking, enhance intelligence exchange and identify the availability of naval and other assets to facilitate national drug interdiction operations.”<sup>90</sup> The susceptibility of Spain from Latin American drug traffickers is due to its close historical and cultural commonalities. The sharing of a common language with Latin America and its wide, unprotected coastlines facilitates the opportunity to transport drugs for consumption in Spain or distribution to

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<sup>89</sup> The Charles Group.” Weekly Hot News Update. July 16, 2008 Volume 4, Number 25”, [www.eucom.mil/english/CommandStaff/CIEG/WHNUV4N25.pdf](http://www.eucom.mil/english/CommandStaff/CIEG/WHNUV4N25.pdf) - 2008-07-18, (accessed 22 Jan 09).



other parts of Europe. The effect of transshipments from Africa to Spain is evident by European consumption reports. “Spain continues to be the largest consumer of cocaine in the European Union, with 3 percent of its population consuming it on a regular basis (20 percent of all European consumers live in Spain), and over 50 percent of new patients admitted to Spanish drug treatment/rehabilitation centers during the year were cocaine addicts.”<sup>91</sup> The opening of the Maritime Analysis and Operations Center- Narcotics is a strong indication of Spain becoming a leader among the European Union (EU) countries in the fight against narcotics. The Maritime Analysis and Operating Center will increase the European Union capacity to protect its south-western flank.

### **European Awakening**

The European Union is the biggest single developed market in the world comprised of currently 27 countries. Only seven European Union countries inaugurated the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre on Sept 30, 2007. The disparity between the numbers is disturbing and is an indicator of the challenge that the MAOC-N will face in developing engagements for European resources. This new center is designed to help combat the flow of drugs over the Atlantic Ocean, particularly the vast quantities of cocaine from South America. The reluctance of European Union countries to recognize the growing problem and delay the necessary engagement to battle this threat is increasing the risk to their citizens.

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<sup>90</sup> Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. “Lenihan launches Ireland’s participation in new European Centre to tackle cocaine shipments”, [http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/European\\_Centre\\_to\\_tackle\\_cocaine\\_shipments](http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/European_Centre_to_tackle_cocaine_shipments), (accessed 28 Jan 09).

<sup>91</sup> U.S. Dept. of State Spanish Embassy. “International Narcotics Control Strategic Report 2008”, <http://barcelona.usconsulate.gov/narcotics2008.html>, (accessed 28 Jan 09).

Indicators are developing that point to the recognition that changes are needed. The acknowledgement and recognition of the direct threat posed to Latin American governments and certainly exemplified by the Mexican government from drug cartels on a nation's security, is starting to become evident to European countries. European and U.S. interests are finally beginning to recognize the significant threat of the drug-trafficking problem, particularly in regions with both vital interests and security hurdles, and is starting to pay greater attention. This is certainly the situation in several African and some Balkan regions and countries that have both strategic and economic interests (e.g. oil, energy, precious minerals, economic opportunity etc) and extreme security problems (e.g. disease, terrorism and political instability).

“Simply, in certain countries, raw material production, economic stability and other interests are directly at risk due to the presence of highly capable, lethal drug cartels. Media sources have begun to link the drug threat posed to certain countries to the resources those countries contain; if not explicitly stated in the headline, the merging of these two themes in the text indicates that the narcotics trade in some countries is so potent that it could undermine or threaten the resource development and acquisition in those same countries. Recent articles making these connections abound. For example, a Reuters article from Jul 12th, 2008 makes a connection between the drug threat posed to Guinea and its massive bauxite reserves. A Bloomberg article July 1st, 2008 reported on the potential impact the drug trade could have on Bolivia's natural gas and petroleum industries.”<sup>92</sup>

The national resources that are expended, combating the plague of drugs, reduces the funding available for social and humanitarian pursuits. Further indicators that the strength of drug cartels and organized crime is more than a side issue in European countries, is bolstered by French Interior Minister Michele Alliot-Marie, who indicated:

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<sup>92</sup> The Charles Group.” Weekly Hot News Update. July 16, 2008 Volume 4, Number 25”, [www.eucom.mil/english/CommandStaff/CIEG/WHNUV4N25.pdf](http://www.eucom.mil/english/CommandStaff/CIEG/WHNUV4N25.pdf) - 2008-07-18, (accessed 22 Jan 09).

“The European Union should set up an anti- drugs centre in the Mediterranean, similar to one already operating on Portugal's Atlantic coast (MAOC-N), EU justice ministers agreed Monday. At an informal meeting in the French beach resort of Cannes, ministers agreed that the bloc should form a centre "letting them share common information and means of action in the fight against drugs, arms ... and human-trafficking,"<sup>93</sup>

The Minister readily acknowledges the success of MACOC-N, which has greatly boosted the amount of drug seizures, made on transatlantic routes. The Minister sees the value of a Mediterranean centre that would also involve North African states that are becoming transshipment centers for drugs.

## **V. Conclusion**

In analysis and discussion it is very evident that Plan Colombia and its follow-on plan, “Strategy for Strengthening Democracy”, have proven successful. The debate exists on how successful or the levels of success achieved, but with out a doubt, Colombia has made significant progress. Mr. Gerard Martin, director of the Colombia program at Georgetown University in Washington, another advocate of Colombian success, said “that despite rampant drug trafficking and civil unrest that has continued for more than 40 years, Colombia is becoming a Latin American success story and much of its democratic system of government resembles that of the United States.”<sup>94</sup> Is Plan Columbia’s methodology/success exportable to the countries of and western Africa? There are many positive functions that can be exported to West Africa however challenges of culture and

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<sup>93</sup>The Earth Times.” EU eyes anti-drugs centre for Mediterranean”, <http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/show/217303,extra%C2%A0eu-eyes-anti-drugs-centre-for-mediterranean.html> , (accessed 22 Jan 09).

language pose additional coordination requirements.

The homogeneous culture and language enjoyed by the majority of South America is a factor in the success of this methodology. The tribal, language, cultural challenges in Africa are measurably greater than South America. These challenges are formidable, but it is also very evident that the business community is finding value in African engagement. “Sino-African trade has jumped from around \$10 billion per year in 2000 to over \$106 billion last year.”<sup>95</sup> These successful business ventures are an indicator that these challenges can be mitigated. Effective governance is the foundation of economic growth and reduces poverty. The proper application of the components and functions of an exportable Plan Colombia to Africa will be a powerful tool in counter narcotic development solutions. The functions of hard power-using exercises; such as, training, bilateral operations, foreign military sales, and soft power approaches; such as, USAID, legal engagements, nation stability and humanitarian medical assistance, provide a whole government approach and increase the opportunity for success.

President Uribe’s exceptional execution of Plan Colombia and the plan of Strengthening Democracy have significantly reduced FARC strength and operations. There is evidence that FARC representatives are in West Africa. Certainly a concern for AFRICOM will be to plan for the challenge of FARC involvement in their area of responsibility. Using lessons learned from SOUTHCOM and Plan Colombia and deterring the migration of one of the most formidable narco-terrorist organizations should

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<sup>94</sup> U.S. DOS, Bureau of International Information. “Democracy in Colombia Seen Making Measurable Gains”. <http://www.america.gov/st/democracynenglish/2008/April/200804231231171xeneerg0.1904871.htm> 1, (accessed 13 Feb 09)

be a priority for AFRICOM.

The United States, utilizing the newly formed AFRICOM to apply methodology and lessons learned from strategic engagement with Columbia, will be able to provide narco-trafficking expertise to West Africa that will increase value to West African nations and preserve U.S. interests.

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